OLA

—OR—

A Christmas Present for Mother

A
Fifteen
Minute
Christmas
Play

BY

JOHN D. MACDONALD

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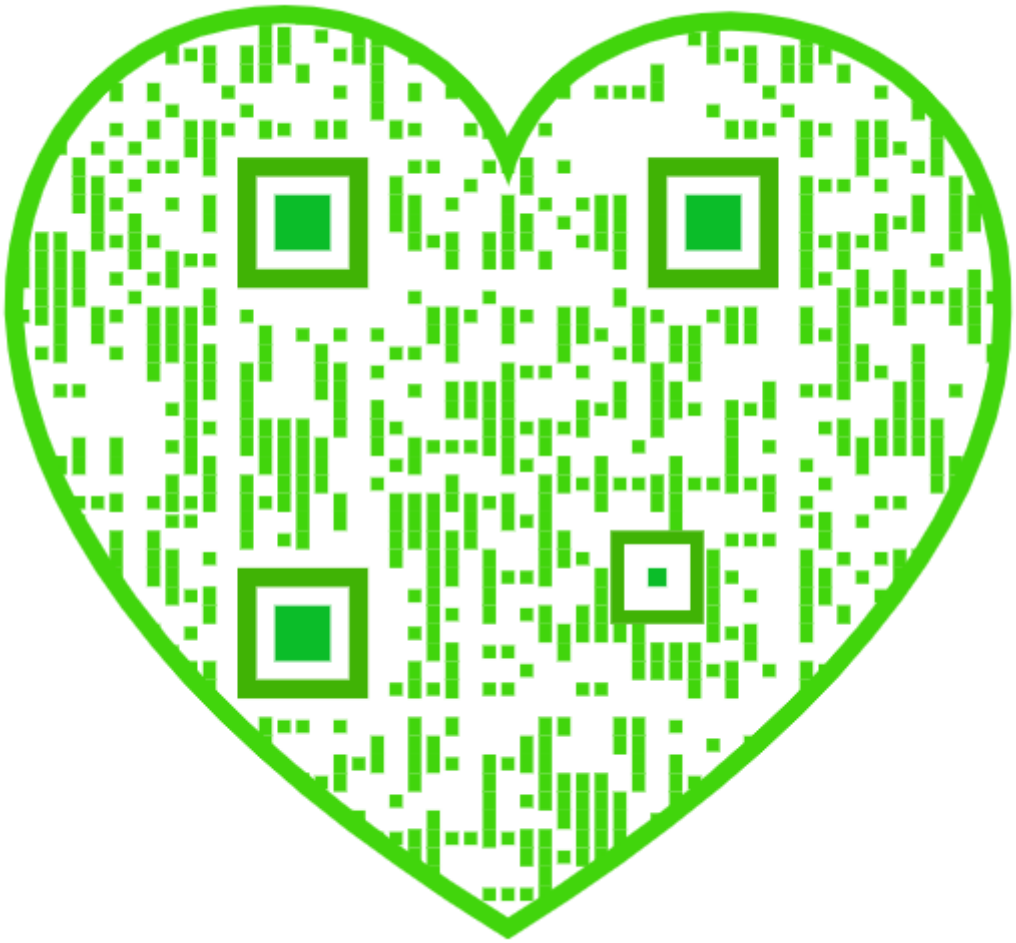

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Requisites

SCENE—*A sitting-room with fireplace; a small one- or two-burner oil stove hid in fireplace*

CHARACTERS—*Alta Good, Henry Good, Leon Good, Mrs. Good, Ola (a street waif)*

(Time—About 15 minutes)

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—or—

A Christmas Present for Mother

A Play for Two Boys, Two Girls and One Woman

Alta (working on a tidy, sighs heavily.)

Leon (whittling a stick, looks up at Alta). I say, Alta, isn't that tidy finished yet? You must be taking a lot of pains with it, for you have been a long time at it.

Alta. That is true, Leon, I have been working on it a long time. You see it is for mother, and I can only work on it when she is away somewhere. I have quite a lot to do on it, but I think I can finish it before mother comes home.

Leon. You had better let Henry and me help you, Alta, and then you surely will finish it.

Alta (laughing). Oh, Leon, it would be a tidy if I let you and Henry get in some of your stitches on it. *(Laughingly.)* I rather think that it would be an un-tidy instead of a tidy. I think you had better crack some nuts for mother and leave me to do this.

Henry (who has been rubbing some corn off into the popper). Yes, Leon, you get some nuts cracked and leave sister to do her fancy work. I am going to pop this corn and have it ready for mother when she gets home. *(Henry pops the corn and Leon cracks nuts.)* By the way, Alta, what do you think mother will bring you for a Christmas present? A writing-pad or an automobile? You wanted both, but as we are very poor you will likely get only one of them. Which shall it be?

Alta. Now Henry please don't tease me any more about that automobile. You know I was only fooling. Besides, there are a number of things that I need more than I do an automobile.

Leon. I know what Alta wants, Henry. She would like a half dozen more brothers just like us. Come now, Alta, isn't that so?

Alta. No, not at all, Leon. Two brothers are enough for me. But I would like a sister to play with. You boys tease me so.

Henry. Perhaps mother will bring you one when she comes home from her Christmas shopping to-night.

Alta. You pop your corn, Henry, and I will attend to my work. I can see that you feel like teasing me again to-night.

Henry (to Leon). I suppose there will be a lot of happy children to-morrow, Leon, with plenty of candy and nuts and all kinds of presents. Bill Lark told me they were going to have a Christmas tree at their church, and they were going to give a present to all the poor in the town.

Leon. Say, that will be great, won't it? Still, I'll bet there will be a lot of children that won't get anything, and I feel sorry for them.

Alta. I was reading a story yesterday about a poor little girl, who had no father or mother to care for her. She had no home, but used to sleep in any hall or doorway that she found open. And one cold Christmas eve she froze to death. It made me cry when I read it.

Henry (dumping the corn from the popper on the table). Well, sister, we have no father, and we are very poor, too, but we have a nice home and enough to eat, and the very best mother in all the world.

Alta. Dear me, boys, whatever should we do without our mother? *(Knock heard at door.)*

Alta (hurries to put tidy away). Here comes mother; I'm so glad. *(Goes to door, finds Ola standing there.)* Why, little girl, who are you?

Ola. Oh, please, may I come in and get warm? I'm so very, very cold, and I have no place to go, and no place to sleep. And I'm—I'm so hungry. *(Boys go to the door also.)* Come in, come in and get warm, you poor little thing.

Henry. What is your name, little girl?

Ola (shivering). Oh, I'm just Ola.

Alta. Take off your coat and hat, Ola, and come up to the fire and get warm. You get a chair for her, Henry, while I get her a hot drink and something to eat. *(Henry puts chair by fire.)*

Ola. (starting to remove coat). I guess I'd better keep my things on, 'cause your ma might get mad when she sees me, and I'll have to scoot, 'cause I get kicked out of lots of places. Most people don't like poor folks. They say we steal and lie, and lots of other things. But I don't.

Alta. Here, Ola, eat this bread and drink this, and when mother comes she will give you some more. *(Gives Ola hot drink and bread.)*

Henry. Where are your father and mother, Ola?

Ola. I haven't got none; I'm just alone.

Leon. Well, who takes care of you?

Ola. I do it myself.

Henry (coming closer to Ola). Why, who buys food for you?

Ola. Nobody, only me.

Alta (wiping tears away). You poor—poor—little thing. How do you earn money to buy bread and clothes and shoes?

Ola. I sell matches and papers, and I run errands sometimes for the butcherman, and sometimes I scrub out the butcherman's shop. But I don't get much. And sometimes I sing on the street and I get as much as ten cents.

Henry. Sing for us, will you, Ola? We would like to hear you. *(Ola sings one verse of "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know.")*

Alta (calls boys aside). Say, boys, let's keep Ola. The poor little thing! She can be our sister, and I will give her some of my clothes and shoes to wear. And we can all take care of her.

Leon. Let's do it, Henry. Let's do it. We will give her to mother for her Christmas present.

Henry. All right, we'll do it. When we hear mother coming we will let Ola stand in the corner and cover her up so mother won't see her when she comes in. What fun!

Alta (speaks to Ola). Ola, how would you like to live here with us, and have our mother for your mother, too? Wouldn't it be nice?

Ola (standing up, looks surprised). Oh! Oh! O—h! *(Mrs. Good knocks at the door.)*

Henry. Quick, Ola, quick. Stand over here and we will cover you all up before mother comes in. *(Enter Mrs. Good.)*

Mrs. Good. Well, my dear children, have you enjoyed yourselves while I was out shopping

Alta. Oh yes, mother, we had a splendid time! The boys were real good to me, and didn't tease much. Mother, are all those bundles Christmas presents for us?

Mrs. Good. Now, dear, don't be inquisitive. Wait until to-morrow morning to see what I have for you. *(Places bundles on the table.)*

Henry (to Alta). I see a writing-pad, Alta, but no automobile. *(Alta turns her head away from him.)*

Leon (very importantly, hands in pockets). Well, mother, we have a Christmas present for you, and we're not going to keep you waiting till Christmas morning for it either.

Henry (excitedly). What do you suppose it is, mother? Give a good guess now.

Mrs. Good. Oh, some candy, or some fancy work; isn't that it, Alta?

Alta. No, not fancy work, dear mother, we have something better than that. Our new present moves, and sings, and is very, very useful.

Mrs. Good (smiling). Oh, I know now. You have a canary bird. That moves and sings, and is indeed very useful, because it teaches us to be happy all the time.

Henry. No, it's not a canary, mother, because it talks, too. Now a canary doesn't talk, you know.

Mrs. Good. Henry, it must be a parrot. Come now, isn't it a parrot?

Henry, No, mother, it's no parrot either. Guess again.

Mrs. Good (pondering). No, I'll give it up. But I know it must be something nice; I can tell by your happy faces.

Alta. Bring it out, boys, bring it out. *(Boys carry Ola, still covered up, out to middle of room, in rigid position.)*

Mrs. Good. Oh, what a big present that is, boys!

Leon (as he uncovers Ola). Yes, and it can sing and scrub and sell matches.

Mrs. Good (in surprise). My, children, what little girl is this? How did she come here?

Alta. Mother, the poor little creature came to our door, so cold and hungry, and we brought her in. We thought she would freeze to death. And now, mother, we want to keep her. And she is your Christmas present from us.

Mrs. Good (as she seats herself in chair). Come here, little girl, and tell me all about it. *(Puts arm around Ola.)* What is your name, dear?

Ola. Ola.

Mrs. Good. Ola what?

Ola. Oh, no—not Ola What. It's just Ola. That's all

Mrs. Good. Where is your home, Ola?

Ola. I haven't got no home.

Mrs. Good. But you must live somewhere, and some one must take care of you. Can it be that you are all alone in the world.

Ola. I guess I must be, because no one gives me a home, and I take care of myself. I had a nice mama once and she took care of me. But mama was sick a long time, and she told me one day to always be a good little girl and sometime I could come and see her up in heaven, 'cause she was going there pretty soon. And I guess she went to heaven, 'cause I didn't see her since they took her away in a carriage.

Alta. Do keep her, mother, and we will all share up with her.

Mrs. Good (thoughtfully). Three little ones of my own to provide for; can I take another and a stranger? *(Draws Ola closer to her.)* Ola, the children say you can sing Will you sing for me?

Ola (sings again one verse of "Jesus Loves Me").

Mrs. Good. Ola, would you like to live here with us, and let me be your mother in place of the one that's gone to heaven?

Ola (excitedly). O—h! My! Live here? Oh! In this lovely house? *(Runs over to the fireplace.)* And be warm all the time? Oh, yes, yes!

Mrs. Good. Yes, Ola, and not only have a nice warm home, but a warm place in our hearts, too. Now, dear children, I thank you all for your Christmas present. *(Draws Ola to her.)* And if you will all come closer I will read a few verses from the Bible. Reads Matt. 25: 34-40. Yes, after all, it is more blessed to give than to receive, and for His sake I will give this little one a home.

CURTAIN

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Christmas Plays

(+)**OLA: OR A CHRISTMAS PRESENT FOR MOTHER.** In this little 15-minute play the Christmas present the three children of the "Good" family find for mother is none other than "Ola," a street waif who comes in to get warm while mother is out shopping. Alta, the only girl in the family, has been wishing she had a sister to share the trials which two (2) wideawake brothers bring to her, so she has a double motive in wanting to hide Ola away when mother comes and then bring her out and present her as a Christmas present to mother. Only five characters, 2 boys, 2 girls, and 1 woman, required. No special costumes needed, and the one home scene is simple to provide. Five copies required. Price 30 cts., postpaid.

(+)**MISCHIEVOUS ESTHER AT GRANDMOTHER'S.** It was all Grandmother's fault. Having so many nice things hidden about the house at Christmastime should not be permitted, when the grandchildren are to be left in the house alone while grandmother goes out for the afternoon. Of course the boys were not mischievous, not even curious, but with Esther it was different, for she was a girl. She was a very sweet one though, especially when the molasses she got into was all over her apron. It was Christmastime and everything ends right during this happy season, so putting the soiled apron into the box from which she took the kitten and putting the kitten into the wash basin intended for the apron was only a slight mixup, from which mischievous Esther would soon clear herself. Three characters, 1 girl and 2 boys, 12 years of age, are employed. A simple sitting-room scene; no special costumes; time about 15 minutes. 3 copies only required. Price 25 cts., postpaid.

TELEPHONING TO SANTA CLAUS. A Christmas dialogue for two (2) girls, ten (10) or twelve (12) years of age, who conceive the idea of using the telephone to tell Santa Claus what they most want, and suffer no great surprise when the very things asked for reach them through the "phone." A simple sitting-room scene in which a make-believe "phone" is installed furnishes the setting. Time of rendition about 10 minutes. Price 25 cts., postpaid.

(+)**WHAT CHRISTMAS DID FOR JERUSHA GRUMBLE.** Self-confessedly, she was only 58, but for years she had acted like sixty, that is to say,—oh well, in nature she had been true to her name, and when one's nature suggests a name like hers, it's quite a job to change it. She couldn't forget that, many years before, she had expected to change her name, but, oh well, it wasn't her fault, and Christmas came along and helped her to cover up the past and open a new future for her. Of course it couldn't change her name, but this little play tells how very effectively it did change her nature, and then the contrast between name and nature was a charm in the hitherto repulsive life. It's a pretty story, made into a pleasing Christmas play. There are five characters, all girls; two scenes, easily arranged. Quite ordinary costumes are used and only 5 copies of the book required. Time about 30 minutes. Price 30 cts., postpaid.

(+)**WANTED—CHRISTMAS SPIRIT.** In Prolog, Three Scenes and Epilog. By Hester L. Hopkins. 22 females and 13 male characters in the entire play, but it can be given with 8 females and 7 males by having some assume different characters in various scenes. Time of rendition, 30 to 40 minutes. If only 15 people take part , 12 copies will be required. Price 30 cents per copy, postpaid.

(+)**CHRISTMAS CHEER.** A play in two acts for six females. Time of rendition about 20 minutes.

Four young ladies are the members of a Sunday School class whose teacher has asked that each member of the class shall do something to bring "Christmas Cheer" to someone who would not otherwise be remembered. Each of the girls, unbeknown to the other members of the class, decides to make the "Jones Family" the object of her Christmas visit.

It turns out to be quite a "Surprise party." While one of the girls prepares the Christmas pie, the others of the class provide a pleasant entertainment. When the Christmas pie is cut, Caroline and Amanda find that it is filled with the presents which the class brought. Simple setting and costumes. 6 copies required. Price 25 cents. Postpaid.

If the number of copies specified as "REQUIRED" is ordered at one time, a discount of 33 1-3 per cent will be allowed from list price on all the above.